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ABSTRACT

The circulation systems of three divisional units of Wayne State University libraries (Education, Humanities, Social-Science) needed centralization because their separate operations had created many inconsistences and unnecessary inconveniences. This paper outlines the socio-technical decisions made in the organizational change. It describes the problems of the existing organization and shows how the reorganization process involved physical changes, record re-arrangement, staff reassignments and training, procedural changes, and reorganization of divisional functions. The obstacles and other planning deficiencies involved in the process are also indicated. Procedural suggestions are made for future organizational change. (CH)

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Organizational Change
The Centralization of a Divisional Circulation System

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by
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ABSTRACT

The following paper outlines the socio-technical decisions made in the reorganization of the circulation system at Wayne State University Libraries, and develops a playscript for future organizational change.

THE PROBLEM

Two studies were made in the latter part of 1971 by the Director of Libraries that showed that over 186 persons in the library system were involved in document delivery.* The studies also showed that there were some 98 categories of services policies governing the operation of the library in relation to the public. In many of these categories, it was also found that the policies themselves were not clearly defined and open to individual interpretation. Added to this complexity, there were three separate divisional and one central circulation point in the General Library, each with its own internal operational procedures. The smallest change in policy or procedure meant an extensive operation of communication and training, or from the patron's view, the system was a mass of inconsistency; not a hobgoblin of the mind, but a hobgoblin at every public access point.

THE EXISTING ORGANIZATION

Wayne State University Libraries system was organized into three divisional units; Education, Humanities, and Social Science, each with its own circulation system. These three divisions were housed in one physical plant. Added to these divisions there are separate physical plants for the Law, Medical, and Science libraries.

The Law and Medical libraries used different types of circulation systems from the three divisions and the Science library, however they did conform to most of the loan policies of the entire system. It was decided early in the program that only the three divisions in the main

* Pings, Vern M. and Lothar Spang. "Wayne State University Libraries Operations a Description of Staff Deployment". University Libraries Technical Paper No. 1. December, 1971. Detroit, Michigan.

building would be involved in the centralization process, although certain policy or procedural changes might effect the other libraries.

THE GOAL

It was decided that by centralizing the circulation system, the number of persons involved in the process could be reduced, the book withdrawal operations could be standardized, and the inconsistencies in the source policies eliminated. Also, by centralizing circulation a savings of space was possible, and through the standardization of the operation, a conversion to an automated system should be more easily accomplished.

THE METHOD

From the beginning, it was clear that the centralization of circulation was a complex problem. Circulation was tied into various other functions such as, book binding, special locations, new book processing, special reserve collections, postal reserves and closed books. The records for inventory control were not uniform and were dispersed. The staff would have to be redeployed, retrained and their jobs redefined. Book sorting and reshelving would have to be rerouted. Supervisory personnel would have to be reassigned. Space allocations would have to be made and the placement of the charge machines and queuing determined.

It was determined that the best approach was to move by increments, rather than carry out the operation in one change. Certain functions were redefined, or departments moved, and the staff trained before additional increments were attempted. The process was planned and studied by a committee made up of the acting head of the Humanities division, and two

Social Studies division librarians. Before each increment was implemented it was presented to the office of the Director for consideration and discussed at the Library's Department Head's meeting before action was taken. The implementation of each increment was carried out under the supervision of the Assistant to the Director who was able to act without prejudice toward any one department or division. After the third incremental step, that of integrating the Humanities Division circulation, the acting head of that division was reassigned to directly supervise the operations on a day-to-day basis and work in conjunction with the Circulation Librarian and the Assistant to the Director.

THE PROCESS

Increment One

Historically the central circulation department was responsible for giving "Ready Reference" service, catalog assistance, and interpreting the bibliography collection. However, due to staffing difficulties, it was becoming increasingly difficult to guarantee a consistent level of staffing of this service point. The staffing ranged from professional librarians to library assistants with varying backgrounds. Also, with the eventual influx of the total circulation and inventory control systems, the retention of the ready reference service would have added an additional administrative complexity to the department. Therefore, in November of 1971, the "Ready Reference" collection was disbanded and relocated in the appropriate reference departments. This move freed the former "ready reference" service point and allowed its redefinition as a reception desk.

This reception desk through later incremental changes was only to be staffed at the library assistant level and function as a switch-board, directional information point and handle numerous peripheral circulation functions, which demanded procedural knowledge but little professional judgement.

Increment Two

In January of 1972, the Education Division circulation operation was moved to the Central Circulation department. The library's circulaton system is a manual McBee Key-Sort system. The General Library's files were arranged by call number, and the Education division were filed by charge machine transaction number. In a sense, this change was merely physical since the arrangement of management of records was not changed. The two systems functioned side by side in that the Education charges were clocked through the machines and filed by transaction number, and the General Library's charges were hand stamped and filed in the divisional libraries. Two office assistants were transferred from the Education division to handle the mailing of overdue notices and help in charging out books.

They were trained in the Central Circulation functions of fines collection, rental book collection charging, and the charge out of General Library books. The Central circulation staff was trained in the circulation of Education books. At the same time, a computer terminal was installed, and a program developed to allow the use of the University's computer-maintained name and address file in sending overdue notices. The overdues staff from all the divisions

was trained in use of this program.

Increment Three

Increment three was the most complex of the series of changes. It involved decisions on record arrangement, physical changes, staff reassignments and training, procedural changes, and the reorganization of divisional functions. Therefore, this section will devote a section to each division and change.

A. RECORDS

1. Circulation records - In no way would it be feasible to maintain two distinct circulation systems, so the decision to maintain the records either in transaction number or call number order was necessary. One group of librarians held that the transaction number system was superior because filing time was greatly reduced and the margin of error in filing was less. Patron generated charge records lead to many illigible records; about 300/month or one percent of the Library's circulation. However, by filing by transaction number, the maintainence of an inventory control system would be impossible. In an academic library the availability of a specific document for either teaching (Special Reserve) or faculty research is crucial, and there should be some system for their location. It was therefore recommended by the circulation committee that the files be arranged by call number order.

2. The check record file - is composed of carbon copies of overdue notices sent. The file then is an inventory of overdue books and also an alphabetical access to books held by students and faculty.

Each division held its own check record file and generated their own overdue notices. In increment three this file was consolidated in the general circulation department, along with the overdue process.

3. The divisional shelf-lists contain the location information of the collection. It was decided at least for the duration of this increment, that they remain in the division, where the professional staff could interpret them for the patrons.

4. The divisional card-catalogs remained in the divisions but whether they were necessary still remained a matter of discussion. In all areas they are not as complete as the main card catalog.

B. SPACE ALLOCATIONS AND PHYSICAL CHANGES

In increment three, because the Humanities division's circulation was moving to the general circulation and the staff and equipment move was ccnsiderable, physical and spacial changes were necessary. Larger charge-out desks and a larger fines desk were constructed, which absorbed an additional 570 square feet of public area on the first floor of the library. However, the circulation desk in the Humanities division was dismantled for a gain of 637 square feet in area. When the Social Studies circulation was moved in the fourth increment, their circulation desk was also dismantled for an equal savings in space, so there was a total gain in space of 704 square feet. Some of this space was lost in a later change to expand the Serials section circulation desk which assumed the circulation of Special Reserve books which previously was handled at the divisional circulation points.

Also, the noise and activity was reduced on the upper floors by the circulation consolidation, which increased the effectiveness of the study space.

C. REORGANIZATION OF DIVISIONAL FUNCTIONS

With the centralization of circulation, staffing changes meant that certain jobs were to be consolidated. The relocation of records also made the reorganization of divisional function and integral part of centralization of circulation process. As mentioned earlier, the circulation of reserve books was moved from the divisions to the periodical circulation desk. Instead of two staff members performing this operation part-time, the job was consolidated with one staff member in charge of the operation on a full-time basis. This function has continued to remain under the control of the reference department. The new book and bindery repair processes remained with divisions at this increment, but were slated for reorganization at future increments. The supervision of the Humanities student assistants was transferred to the Central Circulation operation with a future consolidation of this job planned. Administrating the sorting, shelving and stack maintenance of the Humanities collection were under the circulation department, although no physical change was planned until the total consolidation of circulation was completed. The book withdrawal process was divided into two systems: all books lost and missing were to be withdrawn through the circulation department, but books withdrawn by a librarian's decision to weed was to be a divisional duty. The

search and postal reserve process was consolidated under the circulation department. Reception services, handling directional location questions and the document delivery of all non-conventional monographs e.g. (storage, ILL, uncataloged materials) were retained in the circulation department.

D. STAFF RELOCATION

All staff relocations were assigned in increment three, although some of the staff were not moved until subsequent increments. For most of the staff, it not only meant a change in location and supervision, but the acceptance of a new job. The number of man/years was determined from the forementioned study of the Director. Many jobs performed on a part-time basis in each division were combined into single full-time jobs. Many jobs were also reordered according to levels of staff competence as between clerical and para-professional workers. In the past, there were discrepancies in assignments which led to disagreement on the part of the staff.

The jobs were restructured as follows: Three persons processing overdue reminders in each division for both faculty and students were reassigned as follows: two office assistants processing student overdues, one office assistant and one para-professional were in charge of the reserve book collection on a part-time basis-the entire job was given to the office assistant on a full-time basis. Book withdrawals due to loss or damage were done by two para-professionals in the division, this job was combined with only one para-professional in

charge of the circulation department. Circulation statistics were kept in three divisions on a part-time basis; after increment three they were kept by one office assistant in the circulation department. Book bindery and repair was done in all three divisions by office assistants and clerical workers; this job was combined in the reference department. The maintenance of the shelf-list location file was originally centered in the reference department, but at a later increment it was moved to the circulation department with one library assistant in charge. In the past, two para-professionals and one office assistant had been in charge of student training, scheduling, and supervision. These jobs were reordered in that one library assistant was in charge of student scheduling, hiring-interviewing and payroll preparation, while another library assistant was placed in charge of student training and supervision.

Divisional Staffing		Centralized Staffing	
Job Description	No. of Staff	Job Description	No. of Staff
Student and Faculty Overdues	3 office assistants	Student Overdues Faculty Overdues	2 office assistants 1 office assistant
Reserve Books Processing	1 library assistant 1 office assistant	Reserve Books Processing	1 office assistant
Book Withdrawals	2 library assistants	Book Withdrawals	1 library assistant
Statistics	3 part-time office assistants	Statistics	1 office assistant
Searches	2 office assistants	Searches	1 office assistant
Bindery and Repair	2 library assistants	Bindery and Repair	1 library assistant
Student Hiring and Supervision	2 library assistants 1 office assistant	Student Hiring and Supervision	2 library assistants
Shelf-list location Maintenance	2 library assistants	Shelf-list location Maintenance	1 library assistant
Totals	9 library assistants 7 office assistants	Totals	5 library assistants 6 office assistants

Increment three was implemented during the eighth week of the Winter Quarter of the academic year. The circulation files were moved down to the first floor and all circulation was filed according to call number order. The existing Education division's circulation file arranged by transaction number was left intact and would automatically eliminate itself as the books were returned. If the books became overdue, they were appropriately notched and filed according to call number. There were no changes in the student assistant schedules on jobs during this increment, but the new supervisory personnel took over. This caused a rapid breakdown in supervision, especially in the area of the Humanities Division. It became immediately apparent due to staff anticipation of moving and reassignment and the quasi-definition of jobs and procedure, that the next increment of moving the Social Studies circulation down and the final assignment of staff should be accomplished as soon as possible.

Probably the greatest obstacle in effecting organizational change was motivating the staff to accept the proposed changes. Many staff were threatened, and felt that they would lose their jobs, especially when one of the factors contributing to institutional change was economic. They feared that they might lose status or that their jobs would be down graded. There was also the feeling that they were being criticized: The existing organization was a product of their efforts so that an attempt to change the existing organization was to be then taken as tacit criticism that the organization was incorrect or insufficient.

Staff response in these situations was obviously negative and ranged from disagreement that any change was necessary, to an attitude of negativism or defeatism when faced with the proposed solutions.

Attitude change was principally achieved by lengthy discussion and reports at inter-departmental meetings of office assistants. The information available in these meetings alieviated many of the fears and allowed for advance planning on the individual staff member level. It also accustomed staff to working together who previously were in different departments.

Certain negative attitudes did develop during the centralization process which have yet to be eliminated. It developed that those who were assigned to the circulation department rather than remaining in their respective division, viewed the transfer as a negative move. They assumed that their immediate supervisor would not allow the transfer of his best employees and would transfer his least efficient and talented employees. Therefore, if they were transferred, they were his least desirable employees. Whether or not individual supervisors added credibility to this feeling is not known, but in future moves, hopefully supervisors might act in an overtly positive manner and avoid this debilitating attitude. Some on the previous circulation staff had the feeling they must defend their territory or job assignment against the new influx of staff. Some jockeying for jobs or job definition did develop, but the resentment seemed more acute between existing and entering staff. The condition was accentuated by an undefined supervisory staff. The Assistant to the Director, the past Acting Head of

Humanities, and the Circulation Librarian were all in charge of the developing department. Allegiances to individual supervisors added to division among the staff.

Increment Four

On March 13, 1972 the final major increment was implemented in which the Social Studies division's circulation was merged with the central circulation department. In this increment, all of the staff changes were implemented, the final work space arranged, and the files merged. A book sorting area was established on the third floor of the library-which immediately proved too small. Another sorting area was then created in a little used cloak room on the first floor of the library. Many minor changes have been made in this area to limit the handling of books in the sorting and reshelving process.

Up until the point of this increment, the process of change had been one of gradual erosion of the existing system or at times the mere physical relocation of the existing system. In increment four with the total merger of the system and the relocation of the staff, it was impossible to carry on the old system. At this increment a situation of disruption was induced due to two major factors: One was that the workload of many jobs was tripled or quadrupled, which necessitated the creation of new techniques and procedures to handle the load. An example of this is that special card sorters were made to rough sort the charge cards into approximate areas of the call number system. Previously the volume in any location was never great

enough that rough sorting could not be done by hand sorting. Return date stamping of each card was also necessary because of the volume. Staging of the order of filing was also necessary to prevent a greater number of filing errors due to overlap of charge out and the return operation.

The other major planning defect involved with the process was a lack of true in-depth systems analysis. Even though files were considered, job assignment re-allocated, space designed; the actual work flow process was never considered. This planning deficiency resulted in staff having a general knowledge of their own immediate job, but no idea of who picked up the work from there. To alleviate this condition the entire operation was flow-charted as the work flow developed. This confusion could have been prevented by prior meetings of the staff and the development of a complete flow-charting of the operation. These meetings may also have alleviated some of the apprehensions of the staff.

During the past year many smaller adjustments have been made. Some staff turnover has eased the feelings of the division among the staff and allowed better staffing levels to be established. More changes were necessary when the divisions were combined into a central reference point, and the shelf-list was moved to the general circulation department. These changes have been mostly along the lines of communication development and definitions of responsibility.

The incremental method of change seem to work well in that it

allows working models to be developed as change occurs. It allows for gradual change which cushions the effects on the staff. The incremental method also allows the operation of parallel organizations of the old system and the new, so that error in change can be more easily reversible.

Addendum

Playscript for Planning Organizational Change

1.	Committee	The committee should be chosen to act as a problem-solving group composed of varying staff levels and expertise depending upon the change. It is recommended that in changes involving clerical operations certain committee members be drawn from these ranks.
2.	The Committee Defines Its Objectives	The committee should order the administrative change into defined objectives.
3.	A Time Table Adopted	With the definition of objectives a time frame should be imposed on the committee for the completion of its work.
4.	Areas of Change Enumerated	Changes should be defined according to specific areas, i.e., space, operations, staffing, policy.
5.	Charts Developed for Staging	Staging should be developed for the various areas defined in step 4 to insure coordination of change.
6.	Flow-Chart Created for Operation Change	These flow-charts should be developed by the staff persons directly involved in the current operation for the projected operation. These plans should pay special attention to increased or decreased work-loads which may cause entirely new operations to be developed.
7.	Staffing Determined	From existing work-load statistics and the flow chart, staffing should be determined and assigned.
8.	New Staff Revises Flow-Charts	This operation allows for training and role playing for acceptance of proposed change.
9.	Space Allocations Determined	These allocations can be made in relation to determined work paths of flow-charts.
10.	Planning Report Diseminated	The planned change should be communicated to the total staff.
11.	Begin Staging Operations of Change	This portion should be under the control of an administrative officer.